

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF THE SURVIVORS
AND DEPENDENTS OF THE BATTLE OF CRETE

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the survivors and dependents of the Battle of Crete, May 20th, 1941. On that morning sixty years ago, Nazi military forces invaded the island of Crete through air, land and sea. This would be one of the many times where the proud people of Crete have been called to defend their land and their strong belief in freedom.

As waves of German paratroopers landed on the Cretan soil, men, women and children fought with what little they had to defend against advancing fascist oppressors. During the first day of the invasion the Nazi military suffered high losses. The German military encountered a vicious resistance that they had not expected. Hitler's elite 7th Parachute Division had suffered casualties from an opponent who was equipped with knives and homemade weapons. The bombings that occurred in the cities such as Chania, Rethimnon, and Herakleion did not lower the morale of the people but strengthened their will to defend the island.

The Nazi forces took nine days to finally conquer the island and endured a heavy number of casualties. The Cretan people sought refuge in the mountains and staged a resistance that continued on until the final defeat of the Germans in 1945.

The Battle of Crete is viewed by many as significant in delaying Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union and hastening the defeat of the Nazi regime of World War II. The achievements of Cretan soldiers were praised by the Allied Powers and gave hope to those who struggled against the Nazi oppressors. More than twenty-five thousand Cretans lost their lives in the battle and the Nazi occupation that followed. Their villages were burnt to the ground as reprisals for their continued resistance while mass executions of women, children, and the elderly became a daily event. The Nazis were forced to place a large number of troops in the region due to the continued resistance from the heroic Cretans. Their bravery and willingness to sacrifice their lives for the well being of future generations deserves to be honored by all defenders of freedom and democracy.

This year, the 60th year anniversary of the Battle of Crete, President Nikolaos Kastrinkis and the members of the Cretan Association "Omonoia", President Voula Vomvolakis and the members of "Pasiphae", President George Motakis and the members of "Labrys" President Emmanuel Michelakis and the members of "Minos", President Emmanuel Polychronis

and the members of "Idomeneas", President Emmanuel Piperakis and the members of "Brotherhood", President Dinos Mastorakis and the members of "Kazantzakis" and President Evangelos Xenakis and the members of "Philoxenia" will honor these brave guardians of freedom.

It is our duty to preserve and honor their memory and heroic actions that brought forth the defeat of oppression and fascism. The freedom that we now enjoy became possible in part by the blood shed by these heroes. I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to a small island with brave inhabitants that significantly contributed to the preservation of our freedom today.

TRIBUTE TO HIS BEATITUDE
GREGORY III (LAHAM) PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE
EAST, OF ALEXANDRIA AND JERUSALEM

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, the Melkites, or Byzantine Eastern rite Catholics of Middle Eastern origin, are the descendants of the early Christians of Antioch whose presence is a witness to the universality of the Catholic Church. Although the Melkites are concentrated in Syria, Lebanon, the Holy Land, and the Middle East, the United States has served as a welcoming home to the Melkite tradition and community for decades. On Sunday, May 13, 2001, the Melkite community of Michigan and Our Lady of Redemption Church of Warren, St. Joseph Church of Lansing, and St. Michael Church of Plymouth had the distinguished honor of hosting His Beatitude Gregory III, Melkite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, of Alexandria and Jerusalem as part of his first official visit to the United States.

Patriarch Gregory III Laham, elected on November 29, 2000 as the new Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, of Alexandria and Jerusalem, is the leader of the one million faithful Melkites belonging to the Eastern-rite Church. His Beatitude's contributions have made history in the Melkite community. He is the founder of the Magazine Al-Wahdah—Unity in the Faith, the first ecumenical magazine published in the Arabic language. He is also founder of the Cenacle of Jerusalem, an independent intellectual movement of the Holy Land, and author of several books and articles about the Eastern Church. Building youth centers in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, and Rafidia, he has worked hard to create an environment for young Palestinian Christians to gather, meet, and work together. He has been involved in numerous activities to provide assistance for those in need. These ef-

forts include: establishing the Student Fund for college education assistance; the Baby Center for medical care and health supervision for over 7000 Christians, Muslims, and Jews; and Dental Clinics throughout the region. Additionally, he has captivated audiences around the world leading masses, dedications, and religious education services, in his crusade to improve the lives of people through faith.

I applaud the Melkite community of Michigan and the Patriarch Gregory III for their leadership, commitment, and service. I urge my colleagues to join me in saluting him for his exemplary years of faith and service, and to pay tribute to His Beatitude as he embarks on this historic visit to the dedicated Melkite communities across the nation.

COMPREHENSIVE ELECTION
REFORM LEGISLATION NEEDED

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 17, 2001

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the events ensuing since last year's election have placed election reform on the top of the priority list of the American people. There is no question that what occurred in Florida following last year highlighted many of the problems in Florida's own election system. But as my colleagues on the Democratic Special Committee on Election Reform will agree, what occurred in Florida last November is not unique. Indeed, it is a microcosm of the problems that exist in nearly every jurisdiction in the United States. The travesties Florida voters faced last November are a representative sample of the problems voters face throughout the United States.

Civil rights violations, lack of provisional ballots, increasing amounts of overvotes and undervotes, uneducated voters and poll workers, outdated voting machines, the purging of the names of eligible voters, confusing ballots, and not enough funding to improve voting systems, are not unique to Florida. These problems are not unique to any city, county, or state in the country. Instead, they are universal problems that exist from state to state, city to city, and precinct to precinct.

While no silver bullet exists, the problems in our country's election system do have solutions. In the past five months, more than 1,500 election reform bills have been introduced in state legislatures across the country, and 31 states have considered or are considering legislation to upgrade or make uniform their voting standards. On May 2, 2001, the Florida State Legislature joined Georgia's General Assembly as the only two bodies in the U.S. to pass comprehensive election reform legislation.

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